

Testimony submitted to the Public Health Committee:

Introduction: My name is Ann-Marie Snee. I have been a registered nurse for 44 years and have worked for the American Red Cross for approximately 10 of those years. I am testifying in favor of Section 1, paragraph c.

I have seen many changes in the years that I have worked At the Red Cross. I was hired as an R.N. to perform duties related to my knowledge, license, background and expertise. Several years back R.N.'s were in charge at every blood drive. Now that is not always so. An R.N./LPN at all blood drives is on the front line and does much to ensure the safety of both our much needed blood supply and the safety of all of our blood donors. We our the professionals who possess the knowledge to assess our donors for both eligibility to donate and for responding to any adverse health reactions which can and most certainly do occur. Our responsibilities are many and our staff look to us for leadership and for help in answering complex medical issues. They have stated time over time that an R.N./LPN in charge makes a difference.. Please know that we work under the direction of our medical director and that we have a scope of practice and a nurse practice act in the State of Connecticut that we hold in high regard.

Testimony Against Sec 3:

Currently 17 year olds are eligible to donate blood and we hold blood drives at many of the high schools. These donors have a high level of immaturity and donate mainly to get out of class, peer pressure and often to win prizes. They are often ill prepared and do not realize the consequences of such things as not being well hydrated or the need for having eaten a good meal prior to donating. The reaction rate is high and the problems will only increase if the age is lowered to 16. They are still children. If a student is 15 years old one day and 16 the next day they will be eligible to donate. We do all of this without parental permission and I feel sure that many parents are not even aware that their child is donating. Parents should have the ability to discuss this with their children and to make sure that they are prepared to donate if that be the case. In summary I feel that the age of 16 in my experience is much too young to begin blood donations.